

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Harbor Management Commission
Minutes - Thursday, May 24, 2012

The meeting was held at Wethersfield Town Hall and called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Chairperson Tom Ragonese, Richard Lepore, Tom Mull and Dan Silbo. Also present were Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, Charlie Forsdick, Harbormaster, Charlie Viani, Deputy Harbormaster, Jack Gilmartin, representative from Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club and Steve Randall, resident.

A. Public Comments.

Steve Randall spoke to Board members about his concerns regarding park facilities. He sent an email to Ms. Bagley prior to the meeting with his concerns. Ms. Bagley distributed copies of his email to Board members. His first concern was about the boat launch fees at Wethersfield Cove. He felt the fees were too high for canoes, kayaks, and non registered boats. He proposed reducing the fees. His email listed the suggested changes. He felt the Town should encourage the use of non registered boats and provide goodwill by lowering the fees. He reported that Glastonbury and Rocky Hill do not charge for non registered boats. His second concern was about the poor condition of the access road for the 1860 Reservoir. His third concern was about the poor condition of the fence around the upper pond in Mill Woods Park. He reported that there were branches in the pond at the water line and those needed to be cleaned up.

Chairperson Ragonese thanked Mr. Randall for his comments. He asked Ms. Bagley to follow up on the access road to the 1860 Reservoir and the branches in the upper pond at Mill Woods Park. Ms. Bagley explained that the Parks and Recreation Department has identified the fence around the upper pond at Mill Woods for replacement and it is identified in the Capital Improvement Plan. At this time, no funds are available for replacement. Board members had a discussion on the fees for the boat launch facility and asked staff to find out what other towns are charging for boat launch fees. The Board will start the process of reviewing the fees for the boat launch facility at the Cove.

B. Minutes – April 26, 2012.

Dan Silbo moved to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2012 monthly meeting. The motion was seconded by Richard Lepore and approved unanimously. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley for further information on the status of the Lighted Little League Field. Ms. Bagley reported that the field had not been rototilled in the spring. Mr. Mull noted that Mill Woods Softball Field #2 was not rototilled either. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to report this information to the Town Manager.

C. Monthly Report – April 2012.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by Board members. They were pleased that the outfield fence for softball field #2 was replaced.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Memorial Day Parade.

Chairperson Ragonese reminded everyone that the Town Memorial Day Parade is this Saturday with kickoff at 9:00 a.m.

E. Old Business.

1. Air Conditioning Unit for Gymnasium Project at 9/11 Memorial Sports Center.

Ms. Bagley reported that the air conditioning unit has been delivered and the work is scheduled for the first week in June.

F. New Business – None.

G. Board Member Comments.

1. Mr. Silbo reported that the youth soccer fields have been painted with the small circles for the younger age group. He mentioned that the field out at Fuller still has a pitching rubber on it. He asked Ms. Bagley to have it removed.
2. Reports were made that the backstop at Softball field #3 in Mill Woods Park is curling up and needs to be fixed and the double first base at Softball field #1 is broken and needs repair.
3. Chairperson Ragonese reported that the park road sign at Mill Woods Park states Dobmeier Lane. It should read "Dick Dobmeier Lane". He asked Ms. Bagley to have it changed.
4. Next Meeting.
Board members decided to hold their annual tour at their June 28 meeting. They will meet at the Keeney Center parking lot at 5:30 pm. and travel to the Cove for a boat tour. If the weather is inclement or boats are not available, a meeting will be held at the Town Hall.

H. Harbor Management Commission.

1. Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club Application for Proposed Work – Extension of Existing Docks.
Chairperson Ragonese welcomed Mr. Jack Gilmartin, representing the Yacht Club on this project. The Yacht Club needs a review of their plan from the Harbor Management Commission to make sure this work conforms to the Harbor Management Plan. Mr. Gilmartin reviewed the proposed work with the Commission. The Yacht Club has 18 current slips for boats; their proposal is to add 17 additional slips for a total of 35 boating slips. He explained that the extension will encroach slightly over the southerly Town property line in the water. Also, the Yacht Club needs a variance from the commission because their plan shows that the docks will be within 15 feet of the channel. Commission members reviewed the plans presented by Mr. Gilmartin. Commission members had no problems with this project. They recognized that the Yacht Club helps the Town out when the water is too high to launch public safety vessels at the Cove and they allow these vessels to tie up at their dock. Also their plan will improve the boating facilities in the Cove for boaters and make it safer. Dan Silbo moved to recommend the Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club plan for the extension of their existing docks from 18 slips to 35 slips; including the extension that encroaches slightly over the southerly Town property line in the water; and to approve a variance to Section III B2a of the Harbor Management Plan that requires a 15 foot setback of all new structures from any designated channel, because it is necessary to improve public access and avoid significant and unusual hardship to a property owner. Motion seconded by Richard Lepore and approved with three yes votes with Tom Mull abstaining. Ms. Bagley explained that the next step for the Yacht Club is to review the plans with the Inland Wetlands Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission staff for submittal to these commissions for approval.

Mr. Gilmartin discussed the Cove Boat Launch fees with commission members. He asked the Commission to consider providing a club pass for the Yacht Club for launching fees for members. He made this request because of all the cooperation the Yacht Club gives to the Town Emergency Services and to the Harbormaster for the operations in Wethersfield Cove. He asked the Commission to consider this issue as they reviewed the fees. Chairperson Ragonese thanked Mr. Gilmartin for his input on the fees and explained that all suggestions will be considered as they review the Boat Launch fees at the Cove.

2. Harbormaster Report.
Harbormaster Charlie Forsdick sent his monthly report to the commission. Commission members reviewed his report. Mr. Forsdick reported that all moorings have identification tags and nine Yacht club moorings were placed in the Cove.

3. Harbor Management Plan Draft #5.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the State has reviewed draft #5 and has asked the Town to submit a final copy for official review by the State. This final copy will be sent out to them within a week.

4. Status of Permit Process with State for Cove Docks & Boat Launch Ramp.

Ms. Bagley reported that the State has asked for additional information on the proposed work and the consultant is preparing the response for them. The response needs to be back to the State by June 10th.

5. The Harbormaster requested permission to purchase a VHF marine radio for use on the boat.

Commission members approved this request.

I. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Richard Lepore and seconded by Dan Silbo to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department